

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ANDEOTTI SUGGESTS COLLEGIAL MEETING ON SPECIFIC
SUBJECTS MAY BE ACCEPTABLE

1. SUMMARY: IN A RADIO INTERVIEW DEC 26, PRIME MINISTER
ANDREOTTI PROVIDED AN ASSESSMENT OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S STRENGTHS
AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT YEAR'S END. HE ALSO INTERESTINGLY
SUGGESTED THAT COLLEGIAL MEETINGS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL
PARTIES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARC MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE IF CON-
VENED TO HEAR SUGGESTIONS ON SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OR PROVISIONS
OF LAW. END SUMMARY.

2. REFERRING TO HIS GOVERNMENT'S DELICATE POLITICAL BALANCE,
ANDREOTTI DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY SLIPPAGE IN THE GOV-
ERNMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PCI: "NOTHING HAS CHANGED
SINCE LAST JULY...WE ARE AT THE STATUS QUO." ANDREOTTI ALSO
DEFENDED HIS GOVERNMENT AGAINST A CHARGE OF WEAKNESS: "IF
ONE LOOKS AT PARLIAMENT'S WORK IN RELATION TO THE APPROVAL
OF LEGISLATION PRESENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT, I MUST SAY THAT
THE JUDGMENT IS CLEARLY POSITIVE. AGAIN TAYING OUT FOR HIS
LISTENERS THE HARD ECONOMIC REALITIES THAT STILL MUST BE CON-
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FRONTED, ANDREOTTI CALLED FOR RENEWED EFFORTS TO OMERCOME THE
CRISIS (1977 WILL BE "THE DECISIVE YEAR"). ON BALANCE,
HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH HIS GOVERNMENT'S ACCOMPLISH-
MENTS: "WE HAVE AVOIDED MANY GREATER DIFFICULTIES. WE HAVE
BEGUN TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION."

3. ANDREOTTI'S MOST INTERESTING COMMENT REFERRED TO REPUBLICAN LEADER LA MALFA'S CALL (SUPPORTED BY THE PCI AND PSI) FOR A COLLEGIAL MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PARTY SECRETARIES ON THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM. ANDREOTTI'S REPLY WAS AS FOLLOWS: "I BELIEVE THAT POLITICAL MEETINGS ON ONE SUBJECT ARE VERY USEFUL, SUCH AS THE ONE WE HAD ON THE THEME OF PUBLIC ORDER. I CONSIDER, IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO POSTULATE SUCH MEETINGS ON SINGLE LAWS ON SINGLE PROVISIONS AND NOT ON THEMES OF A GENERAL CHARACTER."

4. A FOREIGN PRESS REPRESENTATIVE TOLD US THAT HE ASKED ANDREOTTI'S HESS SPOKESMAN (CECCHERINI) THIS MORNING WHETHER ANDREOTTI MIGHT HAVE IN MIND A SPECIFIC ISSUE SUCH AS RESTRAINT OF THE WAGE POST-OFF-LIVING ESCALATOR (SCALA MOBILE). CECCHERINI ALLOWED THAT SHOULD THE INDUSTRY-LABOR TALKS FAIL TO PRODUCE SATISFACTORY RESULTS, THERE COULD WELL BE A MEETING ON THE SCALA MOBILE TO HEAR THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE PARTY SECRETARIES "IN PREPARATION FOR A PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE."

5. COMMENT: ANDREOTTI SEEMS TO HAVE OPENED THE DOOR SOMEWHAT TO THE CONCEPT OF COLLEGIAL MEETINGS, PROVIDED THEY ARE NOT INSTITUTIONALIZED AND THAT THEIR PURPOSE IS NARROWLY DEFINED AS A VEHICLE FOR THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE VARIOUS PARTY SECRETARIES ON SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OF LAW. IF LIMITED IN SCOPE, HE SEEMS TO FIND ADVANTAGES IN THE CONCEPT, POSSIBLY TO ADVANCE PROPOSALS (SUCH AS LABOR COST REDUCTION) WHICH THE PARTIES MIGHT FIND POLITICALLY DIFFICULT TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALLY. ANDREOTTI DRAWS A CAREFUL DISTINCTION, HOWEVER, BETWEEN SUCH A CONSULTATIVE INCONTRO AND THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ULED, INSTITUTIONAL MEETINGS PROPOSED LAST OCTOBER BY PCI SECRETARY BERLINGUER. THESE WERE FIRMLY REJECTED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY WOULD ALTER THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK BY IN EFFECT SUBSTITUTING AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT DIRECTORATE IN PLACE OF THE GOVERNMENT. BOTH ANDREOTTI AND THE DC HAVE STILL NOT YET RESPONDED OFFICIALLY TO LA MALFA'S "ECONOMIC SUMMIT" PROPOSAL. HOWEVER, THE DC'S DAILY, POPOLO, DID TEMPER THE STRONGLY NEGATIVE LINE INITIALLY TAKEN BY ZACCAGNINI AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS BY SUGGESTING THAT LA MALFA DESERVED "A THOUGHTFUL REPLY." ANDREOTTI SEEMS TO BE PREPARING THE GROUND. BEAUDRY

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